

VZCZCXRO9274
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHNT #0852 1210226
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 010226Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5662
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 7855
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 1941
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 2468
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 2369
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1749

UNCLAS TASHKENT 000852

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: GOU CLOSES ABA/CEELI

REF: Tashkent 810

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) On April 27, a Tashkent City Civil Court judge ordered the American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasia Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) to liquidate. In requesting ABA/CEELI's liquidation, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) alleged that the organization acted outside its mandate and charter by establishing defense lawyer bar associations and providing legal assistance to unregistered legal clinics, used an unregistered logo, and refused to report to the MOJ about its property and resources as required by Uzbek law. (Comment: Even if true, the allegations are neither illegal nor a basis for liquidation under Uzbek law. According to ABA/CEELI's Cooperative Agreement with USAID, property purchased with USG funding remains the property of the USG. Therefore, ABA/CEELI has no property to report to MOJ. End comment.) Following less than 20 minutes of deliberation, the judge ruled to liquidate ABA/CEELI.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: The speed with which the GOU ordered ABA/CEELI closed is remarkable, particularly in contrast to previous NGO closures, which have dragged on for months. ABA/CEELI was given less than 48 hours between being served notice to appear in court and being ordered to liquidate. In this case, the GOU skipped the intermediate steps of suspension and carrying out a criminal investigation and moved straight to liquidation, suggesting a possible new model for the future actions against other organizations.

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